

2013 *Priorities*



a courageous voice for the natural world



2013 PRIORITIES

WILDLIFE

Celebrating diversity.

We believe in the intrinsic right of all species to exist. It is a cornerstone of the GUARDIANS vision and we will continue to defend the Endangered Species Act against attacks because it articulates and enacts the ethical imperative that all species are intrinsically valuable. We will mobilize citizens to defend the Act and also demand full protections for endangered species, whether wolves and whales or sage grouse and minnows. We will also work to end cruelty towards native carnivores throughout the West, creating a more compassionate world where we coexist with these beautiful animals.

Securing Endangered Species Protections. We will continue to ensure that our historic Endangered Species Act settlement agreement, which requires action on more than 850 imperiled species, is implemented. 2013 will be a critical year for the fate of dozens of high profile—and, as yet, unprotected—species such as the Gunnison's sage grouse and the Lesser prairie chicken. We will aggressively ensure that not only each of the species that warrant listing is protected, but also that the Act's full safeguards are utilized to actively recover endangered species.

Replacing the War on Wildlife with Compassion &

Coexistence. Our campaign to rid the West of traps, poisons and other cruel methods of killing animals will intensify. We will advance our federal lawsuit seeking to restrict the legal authority for the federal agency that kills millions of animal every year while also working to erode the social license that enables them to engage in this activity. In Montana we will seek to make a legal ban on trapping of wolverines more permanent while in New Mexico we will work in the state legislature to permanently ban traps and poisons on public lands.

Defending Wolves. Our work to protect wolves will continue to be both geographically expansive and legally ambitious. We will continue two separate lawsuits—one in the Northern Rockies and the other in the Southern Rockies—to return full Endangered Species Act protections and advance consideration of wolf reintroduction. Likewise we will advocate for greater protections for the lobo in the Southwest. At the same time, we will reach out continuously to win new hearts and minds for wolves and shift public opinion. Success will only be certain when wolves are secure and roaming from Mexico to Canada along the spine of the continent.

Wild Oceans. Our fledgling marine program will work to apply the safety net that has helped avert extinction of species on land to the hundreds of critically imperiled species that inhabit our oceans. From the charisma of the Great White Shark and the Sperm whale to the less spectacular but no less stunning Queen Conch, GUARDIANS will continue in 2013 to advocate for full Endangered Species Act listing as a means to protect marine biodiversity.

celebrating diversity

Living rivers.

As we chart our ambitious course to protect and restore rivers in the Southwest we do so with renewed optimism created by having a full-time program director at the helm. With climate change diminishing water in rivers and reducing the resilience of these arteries of life we will intensify our efforts to ensure that the law of the river recognizes that rivers like the Rio Grande have a right to their own waters. Our work to advocate in Congress and the courts for the Rio Grande will be complimented by our work to heal and restore damaged headwater streams and rivers in the Southwest.

The Rio Grande: A Once and Future Great River. The most important priority for the year ahead is to hire a new staff person who will take the reins of the Wild Rivers program and become a fierce advocate for the Rio Grande's rights to its own waters. We also aim to finalize an agreement with the City of Albuquerque that opens a bank account to store environmental water in an upstream reservoir. Our work will create new water leasing and efficiency programs in the Middle Rio Grande to re-allocate water from agriculture to the Rio Grande. The Rio Grande's endangered species, including the magnificent Rio Grande silvery minnow, could be at the forefront of a newly initiated legal fight about how to ensure that the Rio Grande does not go bone dry.

Growing Our River Restoration Program. Our restoration crew will continue to work to breathe new life back into degraded headwaters streams in the Jemez Mountains and throughout New Mexico. In 2013 we will seek to outdo the phenomenal track record we established in 2012 when we planted over 170,000 willows, cottonwoods and other native forage trees along degraded streams. Our work will benefit the habitat of endangered species such as the Rio Grande cutthroat trout, the Northern leopard frog, New Mexico meadow jumping mouse and the Southwest willow flycatcher.

The Gila River. The Gila is the last undammed and truly wild river in the Southwest. Sadly the State of New Mexico wants to "develop" the river in a way that would irrevocably alter the river and the hundreds of species that depend on it. We will work to stop any plan to build a dam on the Gila or to directly divert water from the river.



Enduring wildness.

In our eyes public lands are a part of every citizen's birthright and a defining part of our national heritage. But public lands are only managed in the public interest when we relentlessly defend them against the influence of the likes of Big Oil, agribusiness and the timber industry as they each seek to exploit wildlands to increase corporate profits. We intend to restore and defend public lands, protecting their clean waters and ensuring that our last, best wild places are strongholds for species like wolves, native trout and other endangered animals.

Leopold's Legacy in the Greater Gila. We believe that the landscape that inspired America's first wilderness can also inspire its next, great, protected area. We intend to leverage ranchers' support of voluntary grazing permit retirement to expand wilderness protection in the Gila. We already have two ranchers who control 120,000 acres who support our strategy and vision. In 2013 we intend to secure the support of other ranchers and work with Congress to make the protection permanent. Our strategy will also reduce conflicts and social tension that are currently undermining lobo recovery.

Wild Forests, Clean Waters. We are working in Colorado to ensure that headwater streams and the last wild national forests from which they flow are protected in perpetuity. We're innovatively invoking a provision of the Clean Water Act that will ensure that we keep our cleanest waters clean, providing secure habitat for native trout and clean drinking water for millions of people. Our aim is to secure a designation from the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission this year that will protect more than 500 miles of streams and more than one million acres of roadless lands.

Beavers, Resilience & Adapting to Climate Change. Bringing back beavers, whose dam making skills hold water and create more habitat for fish and wildlife, is one key element of our plan to enable national forests to adapt to climate change. This year we'll finish a mapping project with the state of New Mexico to identify all potential beaver habitat and then create a statewide plan for beaver recovery.

Confronting Motorized Wreckreation. Off road vehicle users fragment wildlands with a spider web of trails and threaten the quiet experience of national forests and the beauty of a fully functional ecosystem. We will seek to overturn a flawed Santa Fe National Forest plan that fails to close sufficient roads, endangering native trout and polluting streams.

enduring wildness

Shifting power.

We're on the frontline in the American West seeking to disrupt the corporate interests that want to worsen the climate crisis by deepening our addiction to coal, oil, and gas. We plan to intensify our efforts, adding new staff, not only because global warming endangers all life, but also because it ravages wildlands, poisons our air and water and undermines the GUARDIANS vision of resilient, dynamic ecosystems. Our drive to end our dependence on coal and shift to cleaner energy will progress as we force companies to confront major new costs of mining and burning coal.

Powering Past Coal. Coal fired power plant closures and reducing greenhouse gas emissions remain our highest priorities. Our creative and relentless federal lawsuits have created new financial liabilities for public utilities that own and operate coal plants. In addition to leveraging our successful Clean Air Act lawsuit to close two of the four units of the San Juan Generating Station in New Mexico, in 2013 we intend to create significant, new legal and financial liabilities for coal plants that operate in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and Utah, ultimately leading to the closure of more coal-fired units.

Confronting Coal at the Source. If you don't mine it you can't burn it. That's our basic reason for engaging in the fight to halt coal mining in the Powder River Basin of Montana and Wyoming, where nearly half of U.S. coal is mined. We'll extend our litigation targeting the Department of Interior's decisions to lease billions of tons of coal as coal giants like Peabody and Arch look to export cheap American coal to China and other foreign countries.

Kids, the Climate Crisis and the Public Trust. In New Mexico we'll continue our innovative lawsuit in state court to ensure that the climate is recognized as a part of the public trust, just as water, air and wildlife already are. Our legal team is representing youth to ensure that the next generation has a voice in the debate about the climate crisis.

The Fracking Disaster. The explosion in oil & gas drilling throughout the West endangers nearly everything that makes our region special: our water, our air, our wildlife and our iconic landscapes. Our work throughout the region aims to protect clean air and also ensure that the federal Bureau of Land Management protects special landscapes like the San Juan Basin of Colorado and New Mexico.

shifting power

MISSION

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS works
to protect and restore wildlife,
wild places and wild rivers
in the American West.



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS
516 Alto Street
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
505.988.9126 wildearthguardians.org
OFFICES ALSO IN: Tucson, AZ and Denver, CO

PHOTOGRAPHY: Cover, Ray Laible; bottom, l to r, Ramona Gaylord, EarthFriends, J.N. Stewart-flickr.com, Adriel Heisey; Back Cover, Tim Springer